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APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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15 Be it known that I, Charles L. Norton, Jr., residing at 2869
Meadow Drive, Marietta, GA, 30062, a citizen of the United States, have
invented certain new and useful improvements in a

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JEWELRY DESIGN SELECTION DEVICE AND METHOD THEREOF

25 of which the following is a specification.

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JEWELRY DESIGN SELECTION DEVICE AND METHOD THEREOF**TECHNICAL FIELD**

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The present invention relates generally to jewelry and, more specifically, to a jewelry design selection device and a method thereof, wherein a user may select a setting from a plurality of settings and view a plurality of stone configurations therein, or may select a stone and view a plurality of setting configurations therefore, thereby assisting the user with design selection and, in the preferred embodiment, creating a record and/or order of the same.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Jewelry seems to have an essentially universal appeal. Throughout history, physical adornment with precious metals and gems has remained prevalent and seems to endure despite continually changing fashion and accessory trends worldwide. It is perhaps the availability of virtually limitless setting designs, precious and semi-precious gemstones, natural and simulated pearls, precious metals and the combination thereof, that enables the continued allure of jewelry.

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The endless variety of combinations, however, can complicate the selection process. For instance, if an individual desires to purchase a piece of jewelry, it is often first necessary to decide upon a broad category, such as rings, bracelets, necklaces, earrings or other type of body jewelry. The plethora of options available within each category can make such a decision difficult. Moreover, even when an individual has a predetermined category in mind, the selection process can still be daunting.

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Many consumers visit jewelry stores and select from the available stock on display. While this method of selection may simplify the process, it is the disadvantageously direct result of a limitation in design options. In an attempt to offer a larger variety of combinations, some jewelers display settings without stones and allow the buyer to select the particular stone type, size, shape and/or color of preference from a non-mounted stock. This does provide the buyer with a greater selection than pre-mounted stock, but is still limited by the jeweler's ability to maintain a large inventory.

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Another method of selection utilized by some jewelers enables a buyer to create a generally custom combination by providing catalog photographs or drawings of available settings and potential stones. Unfortunately, it is difficult for many individuals to look from a

gemstone catalog or photograph to a printed picture of a setting and imagine the stone set therein. Moreover, often after viewing such a large number of selections, it may be difficult for the buyer to recall his or her final choice.

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Therefore, it is readily apparent that there is a need for a jewelry design selection device and a method thereof, wherein a user may select a setting from a plurality of settings and view a plurality of stone configurations therein, or may select a stone and view a plurality of setting configurations therefor, thereby assisting the user with design selection and, in the preferred embodiment, creating a record and/or order of the same, thus preventing the above-discussed disadvantages.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Briefly described, in a preferred embodiment, the present invention overcomes the above-mentioned disadvantages and meets the recognized need for such a device by providing a jewelry selection device and method thereof enabling a user to effectively visualize virtually limitless combinations of setting designs, precious and semi-precious gemstones, natural and simulated pearls and/or precious metals.

According to its major aspects and broadly stated, the present invention is a jewelry design selection device and a method thereof, wherein a user may select a setting from a plurality of settings and view a plurality of stone configurations therein, or may select a stone and view a plurality of setting configurations therefor, thereby assisting the user with design selection and, in the preferred embodiment, creating a record and/or order of the same.

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10 More specifically, the present invention is a jewelry selection device and method thereof, wherein a user can select and view a setting and stone combination, can quickly and easily change either the setting or the stone or both to view another combination, and can create a record of the preferred selection. The preferred device is generally a flat sleeve having at least one viewing window defined therein, wherein interchangeable jewelry selections are visualized therethrough.

In the preferred embodiment, a first rotationally mounted, circular shaped display card is positioned within the sleeve, wherein user access thereto enables rotation thereof. The first display card preferably has a plurality of jewelry settings illustrated thereon, wherein the plurality of settings is generally circularly arranged to enable rotational selection of a setting for visualization through the view window on the sleeve. Preferably, a second rotationally mounted

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5 circular display card is opposingly positioned within the sleeve,
wherein the second display card is generally transparent and wherein
user access thereto enables rotation thereof. The second display card
preferably has a plurality of gemstones illustrated thereon, wherein
the plurality of gemstones is generally circularly arranged to enable
rotational selection of a gemstone for visualization through the view
window on the sleeve, and wherein the second display card is preferably
positioned on top of the first display card thus enabling coincidental
display of the selected gemstone and the selected setting, thereby
visualizing the combination thereof in the view window on the sleeve.

15 In the preferred form, the sleeve has additional view windows,
wherein additional information included on the first display card such
as, for exemplary purposes only, setting style number, price and/or
specifications, is displayed therethrough, and wherein additional
information included on the second display card such as, for exemplary
purposes only, stone size, price and/or specifications, is displayed
therethrough.

20 Preferably, the sleeve is formed from generally sturdy card stock
paper, thereby enabling inexpensive manufacture thereof and printing
thereon. In the preferred embodiment, the sleeve is imprinted with
customer data inquiries such as, for exemplary purposes only, name,

contact information, order date, estimated completion date, size data, pricing and jewelry article specifications. Preferably, the responses to the inquiries are logged and a permanent record is created of the selection and/or order.

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A feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to enable a user to effectively visualize virtually limitless combinations of setting designs, precious and semi-precious gemstones, natural and simulated pearls and/or precious metals.

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Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to reduce the necessary inventory for a jeweler.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to assist in jewelry design selection.

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Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to enable a user to select a setting from a plurality of settings and view a plurality of stone configurations therein.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to enable a user to select a stone and view a plurality of setting configurations therefor.

5 Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to create a record of design selection.

10 Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to generate an order form for a design selection.

15 Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to provide an inexpensive means for exhibiting countless arrangements of jewels and gems.

Another feature and advantage of the present invention is the ability of such a method and device to enable a user to quickly and easily exchange a setting and/or stone to view another combination.

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These and other objects, features and advantages of the invention will become more apparent to one skilled in the art from the following description and claims when read in light of the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will be better understood by reading the Detailed Description of the Preferred and Alternate Embodiments with reference to the accompanying drawing figures, in which like reference numerals denote similar structure and refer to like elements throughout, and in which:

FIG. 1 is a top view of a jewelry design selection apparatus according to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, showing a ring setting and stone selection in a view window.

FIG. 2 is a top view of the jewelry design selection apparatus of **FIG. 1**, showing a first display card with ring settings displayed thereon.

FIG. 3 is a top view of the jewelry design selection apparatus of **FIG. 1**, showing a second display card with gemstones displayed thereon.

FIG. 4 is a top view of a jewelry design selection apparatus according to an alternate embodiment of the present invention, showing a sleeve cover with a selection of rings displayed thereon.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED AND ALTERNATE EMBODIMENTS

In describing the preferred and alternate embodiments of the present invention, as illustrated in the figures and/or described herein, specific terminology is employed for the sake of clarity. The invention, however, is not intended to be limited to the specific terminology so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific element includes all technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish similar functions.

Referring now to **FIG. 1**, in its preferred form the present invention is jewelry selection device 10 having display format 20, visual display 40, first visual display selector 60 and second visual display selector 80. Preferably, display format 20 is generally flat sleeve 22, wherein sleeve 22 is preferably formed from card stock paper. While card stock paper is preferred for sleeve 22, other materials could be alternately utilized without departing from the intended scope of the present invention such as, for exemplary purposes only, any weight of paper, cardboard, poster board, plastic, metal, wood, or any other suitable material.

Preferably, sleeve 22 has visual display 40 defined therein, wherein visual display 40 is preferably viewing window 42. First

visual display selector 60 is preferably generally flat, generally circular first display card 62, best seen in **FIG. 2**. In the preferred embodiment, first display card 62 is preferably rotationally mounted to sleeve 22, wherein rotational mount 26a for first display card 62 preferably does not extend through front surface 28 of sleeve 22. One skilled in the art would readily recognize, however, that rotational mount 26a could extend through front surface 28 of sleeve 22 or could be otherwise configured without departing from the intended scope of the present invention. In the preferred embodiment, rotational mount 26a is a rivet. However, other suitable rotational mounts such as, for exemplary purposes only, pins, brads or any other suitable mount may be utilized.

Preferably, peripheral edge 64 of first display card 62 extends from first end 24a of sleeve 22, whereby a user can access first display card 62 and activate rotational movement thereof. Alternatively, a small portion may be cut out of first end 24a of sleeve 22 to allow access to peripheral edge 64. In the preferred form, first display card 62 is printed with a plurality of jewelry setting designs 66. For assistance with ring design selection, first display card 62 is printed with a plurality of ring settings. For assistance with necklace design selection, first display card 62 is printed with a plurality of necklace settings; and so on for any and

all other types and articles of jewelry. Preferably, the plurality of jewelry settings 66 is radially arranged, wherein user rotation of first display card 62 enables a selection and viewing of one of the plurality of jewelry settings 66 through viewing window 42.

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Second visual display selector 80 is preferably generally flat, generally circular second display card 82, best seen in **FIG. 3**. In the preferred embodiment, second display card 82 is preferably rotationally mounted to sleeve 22, wherein rotational mount 26b for second display card 82 preferably does not extend through front surface 28 of sleeve 22. One skilled in the art would readily recognize, however, that rotational mount 26b could extend through front surface 28 of sleeve 22 or could be otherwise configured without departing from the intended scope of the present invention. In the preferred embodiment, rotational mount 26b is a rivet. However, other suitable rotational mounts such as, for exemplary purposes only, pins, brads or any other suitable mount may be utilized.

Preferably, peripheral edge 84 of second display card 82 extends from second end 24b of sleeve 22, whereby a user can access second display card 82 and activate rotational movement thereof. Alternatively, a small portion may be cut out of second end 24b of sleeve 22 to allow access to peripheral edge 84. Preferably, second

display card 82 is mounted to enable it to overlap with first display card 62. In the preferred form, second display card 82 is substantially transparent and is printed with a plurality of gemstones 86. Preferably, the plurality of gemstones 86 is radially arranged on second display card 82, wherein user rotation of second display card 82 enables a selection and viewing of one of the plurality of gemstones 86 through viewing window 42 with coincident viewing of one of the plurality of jewelry settings 66 of first display card 62 through viewing window 42 and through substantially transparent second display card 82.

In the preferred form, sleeve 22 has second window 44 and third window 46 defined therein. Preferably, a plurality of setting information 68 is printed on first display card 62 such as, for exemplary purposes only, setting style number, price and/or other specifications, wherein user selection and display of one of the plurality of settings 66 through viewing window 42 enables coincident viewing an appropriate selection from the plurality of setting information 68 through second window 44. Preferably, a plurality of gemstone information (not shown) is printed on second display card 82 such as, for exemplary purposes only, stone size, price and/or other specifications, wherein user selection and display of one of the plurality of gemstones 86 through viewing window 42 enables coincident

viewing an appropriate selection from the plurality of gemstone information 88 through third window 46.

In the preferred embodiment, sleeve 22 is imprinted with a plurality of data inquiries 30 such as, for exemplary purposes only, name, contact information, order date, estimated completion date, size data, pricing and jewelry article specifications. Preferably, user responses to the plurality of data inquiries 30 are logged onto sleeve 22, wherein a record and/or order form is created as a result thereof.

As best seen in **FIG. 4**, in an alternate embodiment, jewelry design selection device 10 has cover 90 provided thereon, wherein cover 90 is hingedly or foldably positioned proximate to sleeve 22. Cover 90 has outer surface 92 and inner surface 94, wherein inner surface 94 rests proximate to sleeve 22 when cover 90 is in a closed position. When cover 90 is in an open position, inner surface 94 is visible to a user, wherein a plurality of setting and gemstone combinations is referenced thereon. When cover 90 is in a closed position, outer surface 92 is visible to a user, wherein jeweler identification, logo imprinting or other advertising can be provided.

In an alternate embodiment, sleeve 22 could carry a removable overlay, wherein information recorded thereon could be removed from

jewelry design selection device 10 and jewelry design selection device 10 could be re-utilized.

In an alternate embodiment, sleeve 22 could carry a pad, wherein each sheet could have information recorded thereon, could be removed from jewelry design selection device 10, and a new blank sheet could be available for a subsequent user.

In an alternate embodiment, sleeve 22 could have an outer sleeve, wherein information recorded thereon could be removed from jewelry design selection device 10 and jewelry design selection device 10 could be re-utilized.

In an alternate embodiment, sleeve 22 could have a plurality of overlays and carbon or transfer paper provided therebetween, wherein multiple copies of information recorded on sleeve 22 could be created.

In an alternate embodiment, sleeve 22 could have a non-permanent marking surface, wherein a copy of recorded information and jewelry design selection could be made, and information could be removed to enable subsequent utilization of jewelry design selection device 10.

In an alternate embodiment, jewelry design selection device 10

could carry additional visual display selectors, wherein a larger variety of features could be visualized, including but not limited to, available chain types for necklace settings, additional or accompanying gemstones for placement proximate to a main gemstone
5 mount, and/or jackets.

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In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 could have a window defined therein and sleeve 22 could have any number of additional first display cards with additional selections printed thereon, wherein the additional first display cards could be rotationally and coaxially mounted with first display card 62, whereby alignment of the window on first display card 62 and/or any additional first display cards within viewing window 42 could enable visualization of the subsequent additional first display card.

In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 and/or second display card 82 could be removable.

20 In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 and second display card 82 could be generally rectangular shaped and slidably carried within sleeve 22, wherein longitudinal movement thereof could enable user selection from a variety of settings and gemstones, respectively. Moreover, additional rectangular shaped cards could be

provided, thereby enabling removal and insertion of a plurality of cards in a plurality of combinations, thus increasing the available jewelry design selections.

5 In an alternate embodiment, at least one additional window could be defined in sleeve 22 and additional material could be printed on first display card 62, wherein user selection and display of a setting design in viewing window 42 could coincide with a list of recommended gemstone qualities, shapes and/or sizes best suited for the selected
10 setting design.

In an alternate embodiment, at least one additional window could be defined in sleeve 22 and additional material could be printed on second display card 82, wherein user selection and display of a gemstone in viewing window 42 could coincide with a list of recommended setting designs or styles best suited for the selected gemstone, or could coincide with a list of prices for a range of gemstone weights.

20 In an alternate embodiment, display format 20 could be graphic or digital image on a computer display, wherein the display could be any type of computer display such as, for exemplary purposes only a monitor, laptop, projection screen, personal data device screen or any

other suitable graphic or digital image display device. First visual display selector 60 could be a first input button, wherein a user could choose to enter data such as, for exemplary purposes only, a style number, type of precious metal or other setting specification to view a particular setting design, or wherein a user could scroll through available setting designs. Second visual display selector 80 could be a second input button, wherein a user could choose to enter data such as, for exemplary purposes only, a gemstone type, weight or other gemstone specification to view a particular gemstone, or wherein a user could scroll through available gemstones. The combination of selections from first input button and second input button could be displayed on visual display 40, wherein additional buttons could be provided to enable a three-dimensional image of the created design combination to be viewed from different angles and perspectives. The graphic or digital image thereof could be printed, could be downloaded to a data storage device, or could be transferred to an order file for further processing.

In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 and second display card 82 could be generally octagonal, hexagonal or could be any other suitable shape.

In an alternate embodiment, peripheral edge 64 of first display

card 62 and peripheral edge 84 of second display card 82 could be user accessible and rotatable from any position relative to sleeve 22.

In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 could be substantially transparent and second display card 82 could be substantially opaque, wherein first display card 62 could overlap with second display card 82.

In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 and second display card 82 could be substantially transparent.

In an alternate embodiment, first display card 62 and second display card 82 could each display any component part of an article of jewelry or a combination thereof.

In an alternate embodiment, jewelry design selection device 10 could be utilized for costume jewelry and/or for a combination of synthetic and precious and/or semi-precious components.

In the preferred use, jewelry design selection device 10 is provided to a consumer, wherein cover 90 is placed in an open position to enable visualization of inner surface 94 and any printed display thereon, and to enable visualization of sleeve 22. Preferably, a user

rotates first display card 62 by accessing peripheral edge 64 thereof,
viewing setting designs of the plurality of jewelry setting designs 66
through viewing window 42 and selecting a jewelry setting design for
continued display. Preferably, a user rotates second display card 82
5 by accessing peripheral edge 84 thereof, viewing gemstone designs of
the plurality of gemstones 86 through viewing window 42 with coincident
viewing of the selection from the plurality of jewelry settings 66 of
first display card 62 through viewing window 42 and through
substantially transparent second display card 82. In the preferred
10 form, the combined selection and display also enables viewing of
setting information 68 through second window 44 and gemstone
information through third window 46. The plurality of data inquiries
30 is completed by the user and/or jeweler, thereby creating a
permanent record and/or order form.

Having thus described exemplary embodiments of the present
invention, it should be noted by those skilled in the art that the
within disclosures are exemplary only, and that various other
alternatives, adaptations, and modifications may be made within the
20 scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the present invention
is not limited to the specific embodiments illustrated or described
herein, but is limited only by the following claims.